THE ASIAN AGE

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WINDOWS

20 UP children held hostage by murder accused

Farrukhabad, UP: Twenty children are being held hostage at a house in a village in Farrukhabad by a man who had invited them for a birthday party, the police said on Thursday. Subhash Batham, who is a murder accused, has fired from inside the it, they said. Commandos are being rushed to the spot, Uttar Pradesh DGP O.P. Singh said. "The man called the children for a birthday party and held them hostage in the basement of the house. He has fired six shots from inside," the police added. — *PTI*

Novak Djokovic celebrates after beating Roger Federer during their men's singles semi-final match of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Thursday. — *AFP*

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SC rejects curative petition of convict in Nirbhaya case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the curative petition of one of the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case saying "no case is made out". The top court also rejected convict Akshay Kumar Singh's plea seeking stay of his execution. "The application for oral hearing is rejected," said the bench.

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WEATHER

Max: 18°C
Min: 7°C
RH: 66%
Rainfall: 10%

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Shashti till 3.50 pm
Star: Revathi till 6.07 pm
Varjyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 9.07 am to 9.52 am; 12.52 pm to 1.37 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

SUNSET TODAY 5.59 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 7.10 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.58 AM
MOONSET TODAY 11.38 PM

COUNTERPOINT

Don't worry, I have already hoarded enough cash to invest in vote bank for 2 days!

■ Culprit shouted '*Yeh lo azaadi*', detained ■ Student injured

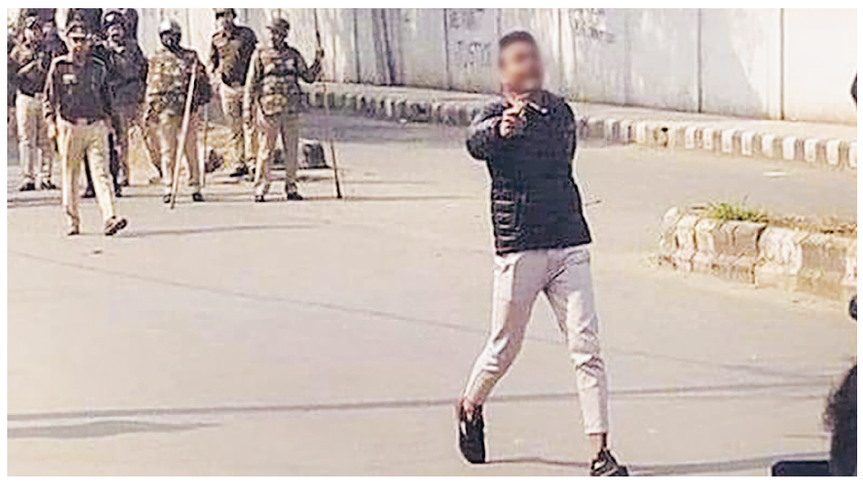
Teen opens fire at Jamia, huge protests erupt again

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JAN. 30

Thousands of people and police personnel faced off against each other near the Jamia Millia Islamia campus on Thursday after a teenager fired a pistol at a group of anti-CAA protesters, injuring a student, before walking away while waving the firearm over his head, shouting "Yeh lo aazadi". The injured student, Shahdab Farooq, who was seen bleeding from his left hand, was first taken to Holy Family Hospital and later moved to the AIIMS Trauma Centre. Farooq, a mass communications student, belongs to Kashmir.

The terrifying incident took place as hundreds of students, protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act, were on their way to Rajghat to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi, who was assassinated on January 30, 1948. The entire drama, which triggered panic in the area, was captured by television cameras that showed the man in light-coloured trousers and a dark jacket, walking away on an empty road barricaded by the police, turning around and shouting at the protesters in Hindi.

In a chilling video, the teenager is seen walking backwards as he points his gun at protesters. Dozens of policemen in riot gear are seen behind him, but none of them is seen trying to stop the shooter. "*Yeh lo azaadi* (here's your freedom)", he sneered at the protesters. After he fired the shot, one police officer could be seen walking towards him and grabbing him. Saying that he was a juvenile, police officials said the attacker cannot be named. While being taken away, he shouted: "*Delhi Police zindabad* (Long live Delhi Police)".



A person (face blurred as his being an adult could not be ascertained) brandishes a gun towards people protesting against the CAA near Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi on Thursday. A student (below) injured during the incident is taken to a hospital. — *PTI*

The Central govt will not tolerate any such incident, it will be taken seriously and the culprit will not be spared

— **Amit Shah,** *Union home minister*

"By the time the police could react, the person already fired. Everything happened in seconds. The investigation is on and the case has been transferred to the crime branch," special CP (intelligence) Praveer Ranjan told this newspaper. "We have apprehended the person. We are investigating whether he is a juvenile or not." The police has also seized his Aadhaar card, which shows he was born on April 18, 2002.

Soon after the shooting, the locality was heavily barricaded and traffic diverted from all roads near the area. As night fell, massive protests broke out with agitated students and others gathering near the university, breaking barricades and clashing with police personnel. Some demonstrators, including a woman,

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Take care of law & order: Kejri to Shah

New Delhi: Reacting to the Jamia firing incident, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday asked Union home minister Amit Shah to take care of the "deteriorating" law and order situation in Delhi. "What is happening in Delhi? The law and order is deteriorating. Please take care of Delhi's law and order," Kejriwal said in the tweet.

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EC cracks down on minister & BJP MP

72-hr ban on Thakur, 96-hr ban on Parvesh for hate speech

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 30

Union minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur and BJP's West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma were banned by the Election Commission from campaigning in the Delhi Assembly polls for 72 hours and 96 hours respectively for making controversial speeches. The ban came into force from 5 pm on Thursday.

The EC has also decided to convene a special meeting on Friday to discuss all important aspects for the conduct of free and fair elections. It has also granted permission to the Union home ministry to extend by one month the services of Delhi police commissioner Amulya Patnaik, who was due to retire on Friday.

The EC said the BJP leaders had made undesirable and objectionable statements which had the potential to aggravate existing differences. The EC orders barred Mr Thakur and Mr Verma from holding any public meetings, processions, rallies, roadshows and interviews, public utterances in the media (electronic, print, social media) in connection with the ongoing

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Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal during a roadshow at Model Town in New Delhi on Thursday ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections. — *PTI*

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Kejriwal gets EC notice for promising mohalla clinics on court premises

■ Opp. raises eco crisis, PM agrees to discussion

Akalis on CAA: 'You can't pass law like this that'll hurt people'

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY
NEW DELHI, JAN. 30

Barely a day after patching up with the BJP for the Delhi Assembly elections, the Shiromani Akali Dal on Thursday took on the government over the CAA and NRC, saying that legislation like this that would "hurt citizens and minorities should not be passed like this".

At an all-party meeting called by the Centre ahead of the Budget Session of Parliament, Akali Rajya Sabha MP Balwinder Singh Bhunder is learnt to have said: "You cannot pass a legislation like this which would hurt citizens and minorities".

It might be recalled that while the Akalis had voted in favour of the bill when it was passed in Parliament, it had refused to ally with the BJP for the Delhi polls, citing its opposition to the CAA, but on Wednesday they teamed up together at a joint press conference.

Sources said almost all Opposition parties opposed the CAA and the

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Opp. parties to meet to chalk out strategy

New Delhi: As the Budget Session of Parliament starts from Friday, Opposition parties are all set to meet over the weekend to chalk out a joint strategy. Various parties have already held their individual strategy meets for the session and would soon get together to evolve a joint strategy to corner the government on key issues, according to sources.

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1st positive case of coronavirus found in Kerala

If China okays, Wuhan flights today

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 30

The first positive case of novel coronavirus was reported in India on Thursday, from Kerala. The health ministry issued a statement on Thursday saying the patient was a student studying at Wuhan University in China.

"The patient has tested positive for novel coronavirus and is in isolation in the hospital. The patient is stable and is being closely monitored," the statement said. The ministry also issued an advisory asking travellers coming back from China to take certain precautions.

The three men kept in an isolation ward of New Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital have tested negative for coronavirus. "Their samples were sent for testing to NIV Pune and they have tested negative," a health ministry official said. So far, 38 samples from all over India were tested at the Pune laboratory and all have tested negative.

The three men had self reported at the RML Hospital, that is designated to deal with such cases, on Monday with complaints of respiratory trouble and fever. The health ministry has made four more labs functional other than NIV-Pune for testing samples. These are Alleppey, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

The external affairs ministry said it established contact with over 600 Indians living in coronavirus-hit Hubei province in China and asked Indians whether they want to return. The MEA said it hoped the "necessary approval" from China will be granted "soon" to operate two flights evacuating Indian nationals from Hubei, with sources saying if the Chinese approval comes in by Thursday night, the evacuation flights would be operated on Friday itself.

The Indian embassy in

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1,615 Bodo militants in Assam give up weapons

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, JAN. 30

Bringing an end to the three-decade armed conflict in western Assam, altogether 1,615 cadres of three NDFB factions on Thursday laid down their arms before Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal and finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The NDFB factions signed a tripartite peace accord with the Centre and the state government on Monday in New Delhi. All Bodo Students' Union president Pramod Boro and senior Intelligence Burau officer Tapan Deka played a key role in persuading the armed rebel groups to join the mainstream.

Welcoming the cadres — 836 of NDFB-Progressive; 579 of NDFB-Ranjan Daimary; and 200 of NDFB(S) led by B. Saoraigwra — to join mainstream, Mr Sonowal said he was confident the move will inspire others. Over 4,800 weapons, including AK rifles, light-machineguns and stenguns, were surrendered.

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IndiGo pilot objects to Kamra ban

Tells airline it should have consulted him, says Kamra was not unruly

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 30

The pilot of the IndiGo Mumbai-Lucknow flight in which standup comedian Kunal Kamra allegedly "heckled" journalist Arnab Goswami on Tuesday has written to his airline objecting to the ban on Kamra, saying that at no point was he unruly and had obeyed the instructions of the pilot. The aircraft captain added that Kamra had never endangered safety or disobeyed any instructions, leading to questions about the way IndiGo had banned him, without any formal inquiry.

Under the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR), only a temporary 30-day ban can be imposed on passengers pending an inquiry by a committee. For offensive behaviour designed to provoke and create a disturbance, also seen as disruptive behaviour, a passenger can be banned for a maximum of three months, while "physically abusive behaviour" and "endangering the aircraft and passengers" carry bans of six months and two years respectively.

IndiGo announced a ban of six months while other airlines — Air India, SpiceJet and GoAir — did not give any timeframe for the ban. Vistara has said that its internal committee is examining matters.

Capt. Rohit Mateti is learnt to have written to IndiGo's management, saying: "I was disheartened to learn that my airline has taken action in this case solely on the basis of social media posts with no consultation whatsoever with pilot-in-command. This is somewhat unprecedented in my nine years of airline flying. Moving forward, am I to understand that the bar for interpretation

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The pilot said that Kamra had never endangered safety or disobeyed any instructions, leading to questions about the way IndiGo had banned him, without a formal inquiry

Kunal Kamra

■ Democrats in White House race face Iowa caucuses Monday

Trump rushes to Iowa to battle Dems

Des Moines (Iowa), Jan. 30: President Donald Trump takes his re-election campaign roadshow to Iowa on Thursday, aiming to steal the limelight from Democrats whose race to challenge the US President remains in a dead heat days before the first nomination vote.

As a dozen White House candidates make their final pitches before Iowa Democrats vote on Monday, Mr Trump will swoop in to insist the eventual nominee has little chance of defeating him in the general election in November.

The incumbent will no doubt mock Democrats' struggle to identify a clear-cut challenger who embodies a unified vision for the party.

Far-left Senator Bernie Sanders, 78, and moderate ex-vice-president Joe Biden, 77, are the Iowa frontrunners.

However, their divergent political views suggest Democrats remain undecided on which path — revolution or realism — the torchbearer should take as they battle to avoid Mr Trump's re-election.

Mr Trump, who jets in to snowy Des Moines on Thursday evening for a Keep America Great rally, will hammer Democrats over their efforts to remove him via an ongoing Senate impeachment trial that has infuriated the Republican base.

He will also boast about a chugging US economy and highlight the signing of a sweeping new trade agreement, including the US, Mexico and Canada.

Some of Mr Trump's faithful supporters reportedly were already in line a day ahead of the rally at Drake University.

The President will make a prior stop in the battleground state of Michigan, where he will visit a manufacturing plant in Warren to deliver remarks on the USMCA trade pact. — *AFP*

Some of Donald Trump's faithful supporters reportedly were already in line a day ahead of the rally at Drake University